

Random Encounters

Monsters of the Moon

By Eric Haddock



Mine, Mine, All Mine!

The village of Dark Stone has been ravaged by disasters. A murderous dune stalker, a scheming mooncalf, a huge fire caused by moonrats, and a great fihyr-inspired riot of panic and horror have hammered Dark Stone and its residents (see the previous parts to this Random Encounter series).

At last, an omen of good luck has come to the village! The cave near the village (see parts [1](#) and [2](#)) has yielded a moonstone, which is a small fragment of a white quartzlike crystal. In this area, they're believed to have some magical properties and to bring the finder good luck. The stone was discovered by Abner Gilloway, a small boy who had the misfortune of having his pet rats brutally killed by his overreacting parents. Perhaps if he shares this with the village, everyone will calm down and he can find some new rats to raise.



Indeed, the village is ripe for any sort of good news. The mayor of the village seizes on the moonstone as a good omen and decides immediately to put the stone in a monument in the middle of the village. Work is done quickly and before the day is out, a nice wooden affair that prominently features the moonstone stands in the center of the village. Believing the stone will bring the village luck and reverse the trend of late, the stone is considered a village treasure, and guards watch it at night.

A new moon and the lack of a harsh white moonlight comfort Dark Stone, and the thoughts of the villagers are on the cave where the moonstone was found. Perhaps the cave is the beginning of a mine, and maybe more moonstones are ready for harvesting within. If so, a moonstone mine would be an unprecedented boon to the village -- a boon where the village would grow and its residents would be rich, so very rich. . . .

Give It Back

Unfortunately for Dark Stone, this good omen is going to doom the village to destruction. The moonstone belongs to a moonbeast. The discovery and removal of the moonstone was immediately noticed by the moonbeast, and it sets out to recover it as quickly as it can. An individual owning a moonstone cannot be tolerated -- the idea of a whole village owning one is an outrage that the moonbeast cannot conceive of without utter and unreasoning rage darkening its very thoughts.

Moonbeast: hp 171; see *Monster Manual II* page 149.

Unlike the previous disasters, the root of this one is fairly straightforward. The 30-foot-tall tentacular mass that is fueled by incalculable jealousy marches in a straight line for the village, killing all who oppose it, until it reaches the moonstone, grabs it, then goes off in a different direction to retrieve a different moonstone far away.

Although the moonbeast is 30 feet tall, it is invisible and an accomplished trekker. It can squeeze between trees and other obstacles easily, and the night is moonless. All these make the moonbeast surprisingly difficult to notice from a distance while it quickly and invisibly slinks between trees. Lookouts can still spot the moonbeast with a successful Spot check (DC 25). Also its terrible smell and those indescribable noises that pipe from its mass of oil-slicked tentacles may alert those with a whit of attentiveness to its presence. Once the moonbeast reaches Dark Stone, the village as a whole is quickly aware of it.

Fighting the moonbeast is probably not going to be easy for the PCs. The moonbeast concentrates its attacks on the villagers since it perceives them as the owners of the moonstone, which complicates area spells and other tactics the PCs are likely to bring against it.

We'll Be Safe Here

Due to recent house fires (see part [2](#)), many villagers are sleeping in the temple at night. This cluster of villagers is the moonbeast's primary target and source of its rage. The moonbeast's plan is to tear open the top of the temple and kill all the villagers inside. It goes through villagers as quickly as it can, grabbing as many as possible each round in a terrible frenzy of death and anger. For purposes of this random encounter, the moonbeast need only make a Strength check (DC 20) to tear the roof off the temple (due to its height and the fact that the structure isn't quite as stable as it used to be). It casts the roof aside which, if

it lands on anyone, inflicts 11d6 points of damage to anyone who fails a Reflex save (DC 15).

When every villager the moonbeast can find is dead, it seizes the moonstone and leaves Dark Stone.

Bringing the Parts Together

The past four random encounters are tied together by recent events. If necessary, the four parts can happen in the same moon cycle.

[Return to Main Page](#)

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